

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

(G. O. DAY, F.E.S.)

It gives me great pleasure to be here to-day and to take part in this very successful meeting. It was a happy suggestion, which I think is due to Mr. Brittain, that a summer meeting should be held, and held in Vernon. I think the Society is fortunate in having as Secretary and Assistant Secretary such able, energetic, and enthusiastic men as Mr. Treherne and Mr. Brittain. So long as they are kind enough to act, I feel sure that the Society will have its interest sustained, and the precedent they are setting will be a fine incentive to those who follow after. It appears to me that you have in this neighbourhood more numerous—I will not say more enthusiastic—followers of the study of entomology than the Coast and Vancouver Island, and that Vernon might easily become the headquarters of the Society.

In regard to this question, it occurs to me that in appointing future Presidents and Vice-Presidents it might be advisable to choose one from each district; that is to say, a President from Vernon and a Vice-President from Vancouver, or vice versa. But, of course, that can be discussed at the general meeting in January.

What I particularly want to do this evening, in the few remarks I have to address you, is to make a plea for the study of what is called, for the want of a better description, "Systematic Entomology." When I looked through the programme of the proceedings of this meeting, it seemed to me that the economic side held the field. I was in hopes that some of the papers might include general entomology, but this was not to be. Please do not mistake me and think that I do not appreciate economic entomology. The study is most interesting and valuable, but I wish to urge on all our members the broader view of the whole field of entomology. The collecting, naming, classifying, and making life-histories of any order of insects possess a great charm, which no doubt most of us realize. It is quite right that economic entomology should hold first place. It is a most important study, and its importance is being increasingly recognized as time goes on—principally, I think, because the general public are being enlightened by the bulletins on the subject which have been published by the various scientific bodies, showing the enormous damage collectively done to growing crops and trees, and also by interesting articles on insects given in the popular magazines. Up to quite recent years entomology was looked upon as a merely puerile pursuit. It is a curious fact that anything that is cheap and plentiful is held in light esteem, I might almost say despised, by mankind in general. To them all insects are common and insignificant looking and below the serious notice of grown men and women (except the said insects sting), and the person who dabbles in them and studies their little ways is considered a poor harmless kind of individual of very eccentric tastes. But when "the man in the street" recognizes that there is money in it—that the control of insects means money, and the State considers the matter important enough to employ specialists to obtain information and to pay them for the work—then the subject assumes a different aspect.

This is a great gain in public opinion, and I hope that the increased respect already obtained for the subject will continue to grow, and that the appearance of a person with a butterfly-net in the country will not cause any more amusement than seeing a man with a fishing-rod or a bag of golf-clubs.

Then, again, the importance of the economic side is emphasized by the fact that the Society is subsidized by a grant from the Provincial Government, and the authorities will naturally like to see some practical results from the members of our Society. This is already assured by the useful and informing papers which have been read and which are to be delivered to-morrow. So I may urge upon the members what I may call the natural-science side in contradiction to the ultra-useful side. I must confess to feeling rather out of place among such a number of eminent

economic entomologists; your studies and knowledge are along lines differing from those of the systematist, and you know so much more of your subject than I do. The economic side is all for destroying. To paraphrase a sentence in the Bible, the economics say: "This is an insect, come let us kill it, that the fruits of the earth may be ours."

While systematists are not bound by the law "Thou shalt not kill," and it is true that a great number of insects are killed by collectors, still the object of all lovers of the pursuit is to preserve species from extinction, and the tendency is against killing, for to every one of a sensitive nature the wholesale destruction of life must always be distressing. My object is to advocate some endeavour to make the two sides overlap, by urging the economics to take some interest in the collecting, naming, and recording of insects of whatever order they may feel a preference for; and for the collectors to do a little more work in the life-histories of their respective pet orders. I think the more attention is given to this, the more interesting the study becomes.

There is a wide field of useful work waiting to be done in British Columbia, and our Society has a fine opportunity of doing the work. The Society is a nucleus to which will be attracted all those in the district who take an interest in entomology, and which can gather up and record and preserve the work of its individual members. I look forward to the day when the Society shall possess an establishment of its own where it can have collections of named specimens in all orders and with a library of books of reference for the use of its members. It will be a great gain when students can compare specimens with those in the Society's collections and have a certain degree of certainty as to the correct name of the specimen they are examining. Moreover, it would be an incentive to the members to work to obtain species not represented in the Society's collection. The subject of Lepidoptera has, I think, so far received most attention. But even in this branch only the surface has been skimmed. The commoner species are pretty well known, but assiduous work by a greater number of collectors would, I feel confident, bring to light many species hitherto unrecorded, at all events in British Columbia.

What authoritative voice have we on the British Columbia insects? True, Mr. F. H. Wolly-Dod is making a special study of the Noctuidæ, and Drs. Barnes and McDunnough have published valuable notes on some of the rarer species, but since the lamented death of the Rev. G. W. Taylor I know of no special authority on the Geometridæ. Some little work has been done in the Diptera and quite a fair amount in Coleoptera, but, so far as I am aware, the other orders have been sadly neglected.

There is a good field for the study of Neuroptera, including the dragon-flies, and any one taking up Hymenoptera would find the subject most interesting, with untold opportunities for finding new species. I would strongly recommend to our members the serious study, as systematists, of some branch of this order, either ichneumons, gall insects, ants, wasps, bees, sawflies, or any other subdivision, for Hymenoptera is rather a large order to take as a whole. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any authoritative list on the order in Canada to work upon as a basis. If you look through the records of the Canadian Entomological Society for the last six or seven years, you will find that meagre attention has been paid to this order. Therefore there is a splendid opportunity for original research.

Moreover, in Hymenoptera specially, the economic entomologist and the systematist would work on common ground, for in this order is found nature's chief control of other insect pests.

The scientific study of the order would add materially to our general knowledge and should make a valuable contribution to our British Columbia list of insects, and, above all, it would forward the amalgamation of the economic and systematic sides for which I am pleading.